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Viewing cable 08ISLAMABAD3593, ZARDARI TO PETRAEUS: "DEFEAT IS NOT AN OPTION"

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- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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Discussing cables

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| Reference ID | Created | Released | Classification | Origin |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 08ISLAMABAD3593 | 2008-11-15 05:02 | 2011-08-30 01:44 | CONFIDENTIAL | Embassy Islamabad |

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article1988701.ece>

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 003593

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/15/2018

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SUBJECT: ZARDARI TO PETRAEUS: "DEFEAT IS NOT AN OPTION"

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, for reasons 1.4 (b)(d)

¶1. (C) Summary. During a November 3 meeting with CENTCOM Commander Petraeus, President Zardari repeated his commitment to fight terrorism, saying "defeat is not an option." He renewed his request for U.S. economic support, indicated he could support some unilateral U.S. military actions if they were worth the price of negative reactions, and outlined various plans to combat extremism and improve the economy. General Petraeus noted that "your success is our success" in the fight against extremism and said he would work to ensure that the short-term gains of U.S. strikes would not be outweighed by their consequences. Zardari reported he planned to visit Kabul in the coming months. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On November 3, Ambassador and CENTCOM Commander General Petraeus met with President Asif Zardari. Also attending were Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Richard Boucher, Office of Defense Cooperation Pakistan Rear Admiral Michael LeFever, Polcouns (notetaker), Chief of Army Staff General Kayani, and Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir.

¶3. (C) Petraeus noted that he had deliberately made Pakistan his first overseas stop after taking command of CENTCOM. He had received from General Kayani a good layout of Pakistan's campaign strategy against extremist militants and praised Pakistan's success in enacting a joint parliamentary resolution against extremism. Zardari said that "we intend to finish the job; defeat is not an option." The militants, said Zardari, want my job and the state is literally now at stake as the lives of 180 million Pakistanis depended on success in the fight. Petraeus agreed on the importance of obtaining public support for the campaign against terrorism. The effort would require combined political, economic, military and diplomatic engagement. "Your success is our success," he said.

¶4. (C) Petraeus described how some of the lessons American forces learned in Iraq were applicable in Pakistan. Zardari noted that Pakistan had been fighting militancy from before 9/11; Benazir Bhutto long ago had warned Washington about the dangers of Osama bin Laden. She had negotiated with Washington to return and build a democratic government that could better take on the war. Petraeus noted that he had met over dinner with members of the parliament, including some opposition leaders.

¶5. (C) Zardari said his government had taken ownership of the terrorism issue and was working to increase public support, but this was not a one day/one generation war. He needed new laws to normalize procedures for those arrested and spoke of the Saudi model that provided a kind of terrorist detoxification program after a detainee admitted guilt. Petraeus recalled the way the Saudis overcame an existential threat four years ago by using a comprehensive approach that included intelligence, moderate religious education, mosque overhauls, and funding to root out extremists. Zardari said he wanted to borrow from that model, and modify it according to Pakistani customs.

¶6. (C) Saying Pakistan was a rich country in resources but needed short-term help due to the international economic situation, Zardari urged U.S. support through the Friends of Pakistan to sustain the country while he created a middle class and fought extremism. The Taliban, he said, can outpay my soldiers and he needed to compensate persons displaced by the fighting. He was seeking to pay one thousand rupees each to Pakistanis displaced by the current fighting in Bajaur, but did not have adequate resources to reach all the displaced, and it was snowing already in the mountains. Zardari identified poverty, refugee camps and madrassahs as ongoing problems that bred extremism.

¶7. (C) Zardari said he needed help from Pakistan's oil-rich neighbors and was going to Saudi Arabia to ask for resources. He also had asked China for assistance with steel mill construction and other projects. Zardari expressed dismay that time had run out in the U.S. Congress before it could enact the Biden/Lugar assistance bill, but said Pakistan

would engage with the new Congress with a "road show" to convince them to open up U.S. markets that would create jobs. What was needed, said Zardari, was a Marshall Plan to "help us help ourselves. If we slip, we go back to zero."

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18. (C) In an oblique reference to U.S. unilateral military actions, Zardari suggested that the U.S. work collectively with the Pakistani Army to be more interactive and coordinate operations across the Afghan border. Petraeus noted that he had "received the same message" repeatedly all day. Zardari said "we can agree to disagree;" Petraeus responded that the two sides were closer than it seemed. He would work to ensure that the short-term gains of strikes would not be outweighed by their consequences. Zardari said he did not mind paying the price for high-value targets, but it did not appear that Osama bin Laden had been in our sights lately. Pakistan's security forces were fighting, and he was working to build popular support for Pakistan's war. The Marriott bombing had helped to reinforce the message. Hopefully, he said, Pakistani forces can push the militants into the mountains where the GOP could act against them.

19. (C) Zardari said he was also working on building "regional ownership" of the extremism problem. He was building good will with India and wanted to increase trade. He wanted to convince Indian leaders they needed ownership of problems in Afghanistan because Pakistan and India cannot solve the Kashmir issue if Indian intelligence can take advantage in Afghanistan. Zardari plans to visit Kabul on an official tour in the coming months; he said he recently met with the Indian Prime Minister, who he thought was not particularly well-informed on Indian intelligence activities in Afghanistan. Zardari thought that perhaps the UK could help with this initiative.

PATTERSON

=====CABLE ENDS=====